



Children & Family News

May 2007

N.D. Dept. of Human Services' Children & Family Services Division Update

Pinwheels Draw Focus to Child Abuse and Neglect

To raise awareness during Child Abuse Prevention Month, county social service staff planted a sign and pinwheel garden outside of the Divide County Courthouse. The eye catching hand-painted sign and pinwheel display delivered an important public information message. Each pinwheel represented one of the 130 children affected by abuse or neglect in the county over the past five years.

County staff said they chose the pinwheel to symbolize the simplicity, joy, and energy of childhood. Their creative sign also contained a call to action: "Everyone can do something to prevent child abuse. To find out how you can help, contact Divide County Social Services."

The Children and Family Services Division (CFS) provided support for this and other public awareness activities.

Legislative Overview

North Dakota's 60th Legislative Assembly adjourned on April 27, 2007. This session was an active one for the division and the Department of Human Services. Key elements of bills that passed, which impact CFS and child welfare services, are described below and on page two.

HB 1092 – Uniform Juvenile Court Bill

- Contains provisions to comply with the Juvenile Court Act
- Provides language and a process for creating guardianships for children in Juvenile Court
- Calls for a study resolution on the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA)



Pinwheel garden adorns the front lawn of the Divide County Courthouse.



Creative county staff spent several days painting the sign and designing the display.

SB 2012 – Department of Human Services Appropriations Bill

- Provides an additional \$100 reimbursement to counties for child abuse and neglect assessments
- Gives four percent (first year) and five percent (second year) inflationary increases to providers. This applies to

Over→

(SB 2012 Continued)

family foster homes, foster care group homes, residential child care facility providers, and family preservation service providers.

- Increases voluntary treatment program funding by \$296,773 (\$683,000 total)
- Funds post-adoption services at \$176,000
- Increases foster care recruitment funding to \$286,000
- Appropriates \$300,000 for the Healthy Families program in Grand Forks
- Appropriates an additional \$400,000 for child advocacy centers (\$500,000 total)

SB 2100 – Child Protection Services

- Makes changes in the legal definitions of child abuse and neglect (bodily injury standard) and sexual abuse
- Adds foster parents, DJS personnel, and Juvenile Court probation officers to the list of mandatory reporters
- Affirms that CPS assessments can be done in child care and school settings
- Protects the identity of people who provide information for assessments when the report is provided to the subject

SB 2138 – Cohabitation

- Establishes cohabitation for the purpose of “false representation of marital status” as a Class B Misdemeanor. This change may allow CFS to expand foster parent recruitment efforts.

SB 2186 – Transition Assistance for Child Care & Early Childhood Quality Activities

- Adds \$500,000 (TANF funds) for professional development activities for early childhood care providers
- Adds \$1,491,210 (TANF funds) for child care for qualifying low-income families
- Adds \$166,221 (state general funds) to the Child Care Resource and Referral Network to replace reduced federal block grant funding

SB 2260 – Criminal History Record Checks

- Expands the groups of persons that need to be fingerprinted, or may be fingerprinted if a licensing board

requests it, to include corrections facility personnel, social workers applying for licensure, and other groups

- May allow CFS to use background check information between programs such as foster care and adoption (pending federal enabling legislation)

Studies for Legislative Council Consideration

Legislators approved the following resolutions related to children and family services. The 17-member Legislative Council will meet later this month to select interim studies from among the approved study resolutions.

SCR 4004 – Provides for a study of the responsibilities of county and state Judicial System personnel under the Uniform Juvenile Court Act

SCR 4008 – Provides for a study of the issues affecting the delivery of child welfare services including staffing, supervision, funding, and the viability of Joint Powers Agreements

SCR 4025 – Provides for a study of the feasibility and desirability of a program to provide services to young people ages 18-21 who are transitioning out of foster care

Mark Your Calendar

Children & Family Services Conference set for July

The CFS Annual Conference is July 24-26, 2007, at the Best Western Ramkota in Bismarck. Register by calling the CFS UND Training Center at 701-777-3442.

Staff Updates

Pomonis changes divisions

Tom Pomonis has accepted a business analyst position in the Department's Information Technology Services Division. Best wishes Tom.

ND Department of Human Services
Children & Family Services Division

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